FIELD EVALUATION OF LOCAL INTEGRATION OF CENTRAL AFRICAN REFUGEES IN CAMEROON

FINAL FIELD VISIT REPORT

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Evaluating the Effectiveness of Humanitarian Engagement and Programming in Promoting Local Integration of Refugees in Zambia, Tanzania, and Cameroon

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Submitted to:

Office of Policy and Resource Planning, Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM), U.S. Department of State

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Development and Training Services, Inc. (dTS)

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ACRONYM LIST

CAR	Central African Republic
dTS	Development and Training Services, Inc.
GRC	Government of the Republic of Cameroon
IMC	International Medical Corps
IRD	International Relief and Development
MINATD	Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization
MINEDUB	Ministry of Basic Education
MINREX	Ministry of External Relations
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PRM	Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration
PU-AMI	*Première Urgence - Assistance Médicale Internationale*
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNHCR	Office of the United National High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

A two-person team funded by PRM traveled to Cameroon from June 23 to July 11, 2014 to conduct a field evaluation of local integration of refugees from the Central African Republic (CAR). The field evaluation was originally scheduled for February/March 2014, but because of the influx of new refugees from CAR at that time, the visit was postponed. While this delayed the overall evaluation, it was a good opportunity to consider how the experience with the earlier caseload could be applied to the new caseload.

The team interviewed 245 self-settled refugees from the 2005 caseload, including a mix of men and women as well as people from all age groups. The team also interviewed 219 Cameroonians in the host communities, and officials from the Government of the Republic of Cameroon (GRC), UNHCR, partner governments, and non-governmental organizations.

Findings and Conclusions

Social and economic integration have been relatively successful with refugees living peacefully among Cameroonians and at a comparable standard of living. UNHCR's and implementing partner NGO approaches in Cameroon have contributed to the achievements toward social and economic integration: (1) they have established and maintained good relations with GRC officials; (2) have involved village chiefs in decision making; (3) have helped ensure that host villages benefit from external assistance; and (4) have placed a high priority on agricultural and livelihood interventions. Recently, UNHCR has diverted its attention away from local integration of the 2005 caseload because of a new emergency that demands their attention and resources.

Social integration has been somewhat natural because of the shared ethnicities and nomadic pastoralist culture which occasioned seasonal migrations across the border for many years. Social integration has been facilitated by the GRC no-encampment policy, respect for refugees' rights to freedom of movement, and allowing refugees full access to public services, as well as the villages' goodwill, and the refugees' efforts to fit in. There are several threats to their peaceful co-existence, including security concerns related to the new refugees, agro-pastoral issues, and lack of sufficient infrastructure and services to simultaneously meet the needs of the Cameroonians, older caseload refugees, and new refugees. While humanitarian funds are currently being used to build schools, water supply and sanitation facilities, and health centers, at some point the transition from humanitarian to development assistance must occur. Unfortunately, there is currently a scarcity of development resources and actors in Cameroon.

In terms of economic integration, there has been progress in moving refugees off external assistance. Agricultural and livelihood support of UNHCR and PRM has been particularly helpful in promoting economic integration. Agricultural support has helped refugees transition from herders to farmers and has included facilitating land negotiations and providing training, hand tools, and seeds. Livelihood support has also been effective because in addition to training for income-generating activities, the assistance has included the necessary tools, equipment, and other inputs to apply the training. Unfortunately with relatively small plot sizes and lack of modern farming equipment or sustainable agricultural practices, refugees are not likely to move

beyond a hand-to-mouth existence. Similarly, the livelihood support is small scale and produces very little income which then requires households to supplement their income to meet basic needs. Unless the activities are at a larger scale, they are not sufficient to produce the income required to move beyond a subsistence level. Lack of education and training, credit, and access to markets (through freedom of movement, good roads, efficient transportation, reliable communication, etc.) will also prevent the refugees – and host communities – from progressing economically.

The main barrier for full integration is an inadequate pathway to citizenship. While legal integration is allowed by law, it is not accessible to the vast majority of refugees because the costs, lack of information about the process, and bias against uneducated subsistence farmers. So far, the GRC has not indicated any interest in facilitating the process, reducing the fees, or changing their expectations about the potential contributions of rural refugees. The refugees have not yet expressed a desire to be naturalized, but the issue may surface if they become more interested in enjoying the same rights as their Cameroonian neighbors, such as unrestricted freedom of movement, holding civil service jobs, obtaining titles for land, or voting. It could also become an issue if the Cessation Clause is invoked. In this case they would lose their refugee status and be asked to repatriate, something most do not want to do. If they choose to stay, which may increase in likelihood the more settled they become in Cameroon, they will lose their UNHCR identification documents, protection, and the right to stay in Cameroon.

Recommendations

To support a continuation of the current peaceful coexistence of refugees and Cameroonians, the evaluation team recommends the following actions for UNHCR in order of priority:

1. Encourage the GRC to work with village leaders to find solutions to the agro-pastoral issue as farmers and herders clash over livestock that destroy crops because of lack of access to grazing areas. While this is not a uniquely refugee issue, it is perceived to be and will continue intensify as an issue as the number of CAR refugees in Cameroon increases.

2. Ensure that all refugees have current identification cards and that they understand the importance of taking them when they travel outside their village. UNHCR is in the process of providing updated ID cards to the 2005 caseload and continues to emphasize the importance of carrying them when traveling outside the village. At some point in the future UNHCR will provide ID cards to the 2013 caseload.

3. Carefully consider the lessons learned from the 2005 caseload and how best to integrate refugees from the new caseload. (An initial list is provided in this report, which UNHCR should further discuss.) Special consideration to be given to establishing criteria for when to move the refugees from camps into villages and the most effective process for making that happen.

4. Conduct an awareness campaign so that villages know what is being done to ensure their peace and safety, and gain an appreciation for benefits that will come to them from hosting refugees, i.e., more government services, increased demand for goods, and

increased supply of goods. Caution should be taken not to create expectations that cannot be met. The awareness campaign could be conducted as UNHCR surveys potential hosting villages.

5. Provide food and medical assistance to the most vulnerable Cameroonians in host villages on par with the assistance provided to vulnerable refugees in the same villages.

6. Monitor the progress of Level 3 villages while providing increased assistance to Level 1 and Level 2 villages. This will include ensuring that there are teachers in the new schools and monitoring attendance rates, completion rates, and achievement rates; that there are health workers in the new health centers and that the refugees, especially the vulnerable refugees, are seeking treatment; that the water committees are functioning and the pumps are being well maintained; and that the livelihood assistance is being used for its intended purposes. Additional UNHCR staff may be required to oversee the implementing partners who work in the villages.

7. Implement plans to build the capacities of local institutions to manage birth registration, organize information and sensitization campaigns around registration and documentation, support vulnerable individuals to confirm their nationality, and assist the GRC to organize mobile birth-registration campaigns throughout the villages in the East and Adamawa regions. UNHCR should consider working with Plan Cameroon on this given their experience with Universal Birth Registration in urban areas.

8. Continue working with the GRC to create a pathway to citizenship. This should be done when the GRC is ready so that they are not pressured into making commitments that they cannot keep or creating expectations that cannot be met fully. All efforts to create the pathway should be completely consistent with GRC laws so that the validity of citizenship cannot be questioned. (See the country report on Tanzania to be aware of potential pitfalls.)

The team recommends the following for both UNHCR and PRM to support the local integration of refugee populations for whom voluntary return and resettlement are not feasible:

1. Stay focused on the local integration program even though the demands of the current emergency require significant attention and resources. This will require designating staff and budget for UNHCR and implementing partners that are focused solely on local integration. It will also require orienting new staff of UNHCR and partner governments to help them keep focus during staff transitions and competing priorities.

2. Work with humanitarian and development actors to secure funding for much needed infrastructure and public services such as schools, health centers, water points, and latrines for both refugees and host villages in these remote and impoverished villages in the East and Adamawa regions. Priority should be given to Level 1 and 2 villages.

3. Continue supporting agricultural interventions that will lead to self-sufficiency and increase the refugees' standard of living. Moving beyond subsistence-level farming to

cash crops will require larger plots of land, which will have to be negotiated with the village chiefs. Current UNHCR implementing partners will also need to expand training and provide additional inputs to cultivate the additional land.

4. Continue funding income-generating activities, but increase the scale to a point where households have sufficient income to feed their families and invest in expanded income-generating activities so that they can escape the cycle of poverty. For example, rather than purchasing manual grinding machines that are labor-intensive and produce little cash income for a household, consider purchasing more electric machines for a group of households that will result in greater efficiencies and more income.

5. Support micro-credit programs so that refugees – and host villages – can borrow money to fund education and training, start businesses, or purchase equipment that allows refugees to, based on their personal goals, increase their income and move beyond their subsistence existence.

6. Encourage the GRC to allow full freedom of movement and work with the GRC to provide training on refugee rights where there are concentrations of refugees. The training should involve all stakeholders, including community members and the refugees themselves.

Recommendations for the Government of the Republic of Cameroon include:

1. Allow full freedom of movement and make sure that officials understand refugee's rights.

2. Continue providing security at the borders and in/around the refugee sites. In addition to providing police and gendarmes, the GRC could improve security by establishing a community neighborhood watch program that coordinates with police on the communities' security needs. UNHCR with implementing partners and GRC should conduct training on a quarterly basis so that within a year these topics are covered: refugees' rights through the lenses of being hosted by the people of Cameroon, gender-based violence, and community/neighborhood watch security methodologies.

3. Take responsibility, as planned, for issuing GRC identification cards for refugees. It is not clear what is preventing the General Delegation for National Security from moving forward**.**

4. Ensure that there are teachers and health workers to staff newly constructed facilities. This requires funding for salaries and the necessary incentives for trained professionals to move to regions of Cameroon that are less developed and where housing may be an issue.

5. Work with village leaders to find solutions to the agro-pastoral issue. The solutions must acknowledge that herders – whether they be Cameroonian or Central African – depend on cattle for their livelihood, need land for grazing their cattle, and are responsible for managing their cattle.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

A. SCOPE OF WORK

The purpose of the field-based evaluation in Cameroon was to assist in determining the success of PRM and UNHCR's programming and engagement and to recommend what PRM should be doing to support local integration. The findings from this field visit supplement the findings from an earlier desk review and are complemented by field visits to Tanzania and Zambia.

The full study, consisting of the desk study and three field visits, focuses on three key questions:

1. To what extent has the programming and engagement of PRM and UNHCR promoted local integration?
2. What programmatic and diplomatic interventions, as identified by PRM and UNHCR, were most and least successful?
3. What should PRM and its partners be doing to support the self-reliance of refugee populations for whom voluntary return and resettlement are not feasible.

A number of other questions are included in the contract's Statement of Work, including these specific questions about Cameroon:

1. What have been the barriers to making progress?
2. What more should be done programmatically and diplomatically to address these barriers?
3. How are efforts to promote self-reliance and local integration in Cameroon different than in Zambia and Tanzania given that Central African Republic (CAR) refugees do not have access to permanent residency or citizenship options at this time?

This report first reviews the successes and challenges to date with the local integration program and then presents the opportunities and challenges for the future. All the findings are presented first and the report ends with the team's conclusions and recommendations.

B. METHODOLOGY

Over the three-week period in Cameroon, a two-person evaluation team conducted a series of interviews, made observations, and reviewed documentation. The evaluation included interviews with key informants in Yaoundé and the East and Adamawa regions; focus group and individual interviews with 245 CAR refugees from the 2005 caseload; and focus groups with 219 Cameroonians living in the same villages.

The evaluation team worked through partner NGOs to arrange the interviews. In turn, NGOs worked with village leaders to randomly select people for focus groups and interviews.

As indicated in the table below, the evaluation team aimed to have a balance of males and females and equal representation from all age groups. While the balance between males and females was almost achieved, there was disparity among the age groups, with a particularly small showing for the under 18 group, especially women. In the organizers' desire to have the evaluation team talk to as many people as possible, there were few individual interviews arranged which limited the amount of in-depth information collected.

Interview Type	Gender	Age Group
Focus Group – CAR Refugees	82 Males 145 Females	<18 4% 18-29 12% 30-50 48% >50 35%
In-depth One-on-One – CAR Refugees	7 Males 11 Females	<18 28% 18-29 22% 30-50 50% >50 0%
Focus Groups – Cameroonian Host Community	132 Males 81 Females	<18 1% 18-29 33% 30-50 30% >50 37%
TOTAL	221 Males 237 Females **458 TOTAL**	<18 4% 18-29 22% 30-50 40% >50 34%

There was also a deliberate effort to gather information from the two main regions where rural refugees are located (East and Adamawa) and from both predominately Muslim and predominately Christian villages. Likewise, there was a good balance among the three categories of villages that host refugees. UNHCR in Yaoundé has categorized the 308 villages where refugees have settled as follows:

- **Level 1** – 92 sites where UNHCR and partners have provided little support in terms of basic infrastructure and refugee empowerment; the needs remain enormous
- **Level 2** – 72 sites where some achievements have been made but remain insufficient
- **Level 3** – 44 sites which have received enhanced basic social structures and empowerment activities; refugees have achieved a reasonable level of self-sufficiency

In addition, the team interviewed nearly 60 officials from the Government of the Republic of Cameroon (GRC) at various levels, and officials from UNHCR, UNICEF, partner governments including the United States, and NGOs.

Complications arose during the evaluation because UNHCR, UNICEF, and NGO partners were busy dealing with the constant influx of thousands of new refugees from CAR each week. It was necessary to repeatedly clarify with host villages that the study was focused on the 2005 caseload and not the new arrivals and to ensure that the new refugees were not in the focus groups. Access to quality interpreters was also a significant challenge during the evaluation mission.

CHAPTER II: BACKGROUND

A. LOCAL INTEGRATION AS A DURABLE SOLUTION

Naturalization of a refugee in the country of refuge is a key principle in the refugee convention. As stated in Article 34, "The Contracting States shall as far as possible facilitate the assimilation and naturalization of refugees. They shall in particular make every effort to expedite naturalization proceedings and to reduce as far as possible the charges and costs of such proceedings" (UNHCR Website: 1951 Convention and Protocol). This fundamental principle is again mandated in the statute that governs the office of UNHCR where UNHCR is required not only to protect refugees, but also must seek "durable solutions" for refugees. The three durable solutions for refugees are: (1) repatriation, where a refugee returns to their country of origin, (2) resettlement, where a third country (not the country of refuge) offers to settle and provide the necessary steps to full citizenship to the refugee, and (3) naturalization or local integration, the more common term used, where the country of refuge allows refugees to permanently settle in the country and is expected to offer necessary steps to citizenship and/or permanent residency status as a durable solution (UNHCR Website: Durable Solutions). The majority of refugees, no matter how long or short their length of refugee status, voluntarily repatriate. Repatriation is not yet an option for the Central Africans and resettlement is available to only a limited number of refugees.

Local integration is not always a durable solution available to refugees or facilitated for refugees as a group. In the case of Cameroon, according to the 2005 refugee law and 2011 presidential decree, individuals may apply for a residency permit (valid for two years), permanent residency (valid for ten years), and naturalization. The application for naturalization must be approved by the head of state and is only likely to be approved if it can be demonstrated that the individual will add value to the country.

At this point in time, it appears that the GRC is not interested in facilitating naturalization for refugees as a group or to negotiate the fees ($500 for permanent residency), the time requirement (must be a permanent resident for at least ten years), or the minimum age (18). The evaluation team found no strong interest among refugees to obtain citizenship or any awareness of the process or requirements for citizenship. An official from the GRC reported that less than ten refugees have applied for naturalization so far, but did not indicate if the applications were approved.

B. DEFINING AND MEASURING LOCAL INTEGRATION

In order to explore the practices of local integration, it must first be defined. There is a plethora of definitions for local integration yet no universal definition. Nor does the UN Refugee convention provide a legal definition of local integration except Article 34 clearly states that it should include naturalization, thus steps to full citizenship. Based upon the literature, local integration is most commonly defined as a process involving three broad categories: economic,

social, and legal integration where a refugee achieves certain minimum standards within the host country's social, economic, and legal frameworks (UNHCR Website: 1951 Convention and Protocol).

Economic integration is the process wherein a refugee is able to participate in the job or self-employment market, including farming, that is commensurate with their skills and/or they obtain a standard of self-sufficiency or a standard of living that is similar to the host country population. Examples of key economic factors that lead to self-sufficiency are access to land for at least subsistence farming and/or cash crops, access to local markets to sell goods, access to daily worker or casual labor markets, access to credit, livelihood training, and access to professional licenses and/or work permits (Kuhlman, Aug 1993:3).

Social integration is a reciprocal process wherein the host community and state accepts the refugee into their community without fear of discrimination, intimidation, or repression and the refugee is able to create and maintain social bonds and links within the host community (Crisp, 2004:1-2). Given this definition, key social indicators are: participation of the refugee in shared ethnic and/or religious traditions with the host community, inter-marriages, participation in national celebrations, creating relationships with members of other communities, shared linguistic skills, and civil society participation in local and central government and non-government services (Ager & Strang, 2004:3-4).

Legal integration is best defined as a process "…whereby refugees are granted a progressively wider range of rights and entitlements by the host state…The process whereby refugees gain and accumulate rights may lead to the acquisition of permanent residence rights and ultimately to the acquisition of citizenship in the country of asylum" (Crisp, 2004:1-2). Indicators of legal integration are freedom of movement, travel documents (such as a passport), residential permits, work permits, and the ultimate final step of official citizenship or permanent residency.

The processes of economic, social, and legal integration are interdependent. The three processes can also be catalysts for further integration. For example, a refugee who is employed within the host community will by default increase the social links and knowledge of the community. If a refugee has access to health and education services, this also serves as a greater social and cultural catalyst through the exposure and contact the refugee will have within a host community. Certain elements of legal integration, such as freedom of movement, increases the ability of a refugee to have access to markets thus increases the chances of economic integration and self-sufficiency. Additionally, one of the most important indicators of local integration that encompasses all integration processes is safety and security. A refugee must feel safe and secure in order to even begin to locally integrate. If harassment, discrimination, violent and/or criminal acts are a constant threat to a refugee this will severely constrain the ability of a refugee to integrate economically, socially, and/or legally (Kuhlman, Aug 1993:3).

C. OVERVIEW OF CAR REFUGEES IN CAMEROON

The chart below shows the numbers of refugees and asylum seeker in Cameroon from various countries, including the Central African Republic, according to UNHCR Global Appeal 2014-2015. The CAR Revised Regional Refugee Response Plan indicates that by June 15, 2014,

"UNHCR had registered 102,795 CAR refugees in Cameroon…The revised plan now is based on a beneficiary figure of 180,000 refugees to the end of 2014."

UNHCR planning figures for Cameroon

Type of Population	Origin	Dec 2013		Dec 2014		Dec 2015	
		Total in country	UNHCR assisted	Total in country	UNHCR assisted	Total in country	UNHCR assisted
Total		101,560	101,560	93,770	93,770	85,590	85,870
Refugees	CAR	94,450	94,450	86,470	86,470	78,250	78,250
	Chad	1,540	1,540	1,640	1,640	1,690	1,790
	Nigeria	1,760	1,760	1,820	1,820	1,870	1,870
	Various	960	960	1,060	1,060	1,080	1,260
Asylum-seekers	CAR	1,330	1,330	1,300	1,300	1,260	1,260
	Chad	460	460	450	450	440	440
	Guinea	240	240	230	230	230	230
	Various	820	820	800	800	770	770

The refugees from CAR are by far the largest group of refugees in Cameroon. These refugees have been fleeing at a steady rate since 2005/2006 due to high levels of banditry and other threats to security in the northwest region of CAR. Another wave started fleeing CAR in March 2013 following increased political instability and violence. The intake of new refugees was constant during the period immediately preceding and during this evaluation mission.

The 2005 CAR caseload of around 90,000 live mostly in the East and Adamawa regions, with some urban refugees in Yaoundé. (Note that urban refugees were not included in this evaluation.) They live in 308 sites along a surface area of 50,000 square kilometers. According to UNHCR in Yaoundé, the refugee population is estimated as follows:

Region	Population	No. of Sites	Surface Area (sq km)
East	50,000	203	30,000
Adamawa	37,000	105	20,000
Total	**87,000**	**308**	**50,000**

This population is largely from the Mbororo ethnic group and is Muslim. Because of their frequent movement as nomadic pastoralists, they have long-established ties with their host communities, particularly in the East region.

CHAPTER III: EVALUATION OF LOCAL INTEGRATION

A. SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES TO DATE

The evaluation team found that efforts to integrate the CAR refugees economically and socially have been going well since they began settling in Cameroonian villages in 2005. The recent focus on livelihood support has been diverted by a new influx of refugees starting in 2013. This has affected the humanitarian community as they have had to shift resources – human and financial – away from local integration of the 2005 caseload and toward an emergency response for the new caseload. The 2013 caseload arrived malnourished and traumatized so UNHCR and others are hosting them in "refugees sites" until their situations are stabilized. Similarly, UNHCR needs time to work with host communities to determine which ones can absorb the new refugees and are willing to host them given increased concern about security and land issues.

At this time there are no efforts to integrate them legally and there is no indication that this will change in the foreseeable future.

The successes and challenges of various factors of economic, social, and legal integration are explored below based on findings from interviews of almost 250 Central African in Cameroon, as well as members of the host communities, GRC officials, UNHCR, and other key informants.

Self-Reliance

The refugees from CAR that arrived before the current wave – which started in March 2013 – are learning to farm and are approaching food self-sufficiency. In fact, at this point, food from external sources is only provided to the most vulnerable refugees, i.e., widows, elderly and handicapped, so the majority of refugees are fully responsible for securing their own food.

It appears that the refugees who settled in and around established villages have a similar standard of living as the people in the host villages. This means that there are refugees who live above the average and that live below the average, just as with the Cameroonians. Unfortunately, the standard of living is low for both groups, with many living a hand-to-mouth existence. Cameroon is among the poorest nations in the world – ranking 150th out of 187 countries on the UNDP Human Development Index – and within Cameroon, the East and Adamawa regions, where CAR refugees have settled, are two of the poorest regions.

There continues to be a significant gap between needs and availability of health services, clean water, education, livelihood support, and transportation to help lift refugees – and their hosts – out of their impoverished conditions.

Access to Land. While most of the CAR refugees have access to land in Cameroon, the central government has left it up to villages to decide how land is shared and how much is shared. In

some cases, the village chief assigns a plot of public land for the refugee to farm. In other cases an individual Cameroonian may rent or sell private land to a refugee. When land is sold, titles are generally not given because (a) some people do not understand that refugees can now own and transfer property, and (b) the owners of the land may have farmed it for generations without a title.

> "We have enough land for ourselves and enough for the refugees."
> "If we give the land as a gift, we won't take it away."
> - *Members of host communities*

There is a range of plot sizes farmed by the refugees and number of individuals who live off the crops from the land. This becomes increasingly difficult as wives and children are added to the family and as additional family members arrive from CAR who have bypassed the refugee sites. Under the best conditions, the plot sizes are too small to provide at least two meals a day for all family members all year around.

Refugees use the land primarily for farming. Because their history is pastoral, the Central African refugees have had to learn agricultural practices, an effort not required with Angolan and Burundian refugees – the two other refugee populations studied as part of this evaluation series. And because they arrived with nothing, they have been given hand tools and seeds to initiate their farming activity.

As pastoralists, the Central African refugees had cattle and therefore had more resources when they lived in CAR. Unfortunately, most refugees lost their cattle before fleeing, either because the cattle were stolen or the refugees needed cash to pay ransoms to have their children returned. Although few brought cattle with them, Cameroonians often accuse refugees of not adequately managing their cattle. They say that the refugees' cattle bring in diseases because they are not properly vaccinated and that the cattle destroy the farms of Cameroonians. While this may be the case, there are also cases of Cameroonians' cattle destroying the farms of the refugees or farms of other Cameroonians. When this happens, the livelihoods of the farmers are at risk and because they are subsistence farmers, the loss of one seasons' crop is devastating.

> ''The refugees' cattle destroy our crops and our cattle destroy their crops. We cannot just blame them."
> *– Cameroonian farmer*

Local officials understand that the problem with the cattle destroying farm land is not a refugee issue but rather a farmer-herder issue. They have encouraged farmers to place fences around their farm plots, but with their lack of resources and technology, the fences are not sturdy enough to restrain the cattle. Land disputes are often settled between the farmers and herders, sometimes with the assistance of the village chief. However, the agro-pastoral issues are becoming more intense as more refugees enter Cameroon and as the nomadic herders do not feel safe taking their cattle to CAR during Cameroon's dry season as they have done in previous years.

One local official is addressing this issue by bringing together farmers and herders to develop a plan that will be mutually agreeable and will reduce pressures on the land. An official in another area plans to get serious about applying the law which includes imposing a fine if cattle destroy another person's crops.

Achievement of PRM Agricultural and Livelihood Assistance

FY 2010: June 2010 – May 2011, $800,000

1. Improved target household food security through increased production of maize, cassava, and cowpeas for food needs of the most vulnerable
2. Improved access to potable water and management of water resources through constructing new pumps, establishing water stations, constructing washing stations and run-off water harvesting ponds, organizing training in water and sanitation utilization management, all of which contributed to an increase in the amount of irrigated land.
3. Increased access to sanitation and good hygiene practices through providing related facilities and training.

FY 2011: July 2011 – June 2012, $800,000

1. Increased crop yields, greater efficiencies, and more food available through cultivating more land, providing production tools and improved seed varieties, training community crop animator, carrying out off-season gardening, providing animal-based and manually pushed harvest transportation, constructing traditional storage facilities, and equipping cooperatives with animal-based tillage systems.
2. Strengthened capacity of cooperatives and associations to efficiently manage their resources and become self-sustainable.

FY 2012: September 2012 – August 2013, $611,999

Enhanced food security through providing refugees with improved seedlings and farming tools, training community crop animators, cultivating off-season gardens, equipping cooperatives with oxen and accessories for animal-based tillage, constructing storage facilities, equipping cooperatives with motorized grinding machines, conducting workshops in processing of agricultural products, and providing training on seed multiplication.

The team found no evidence that farmers were engaging in agricultural practices that would prolong the fertility of their land. For now the land is fertile but over time it will be less and less productive while at the same time more and more family members will depend on it.

Access to Credit. Access to credit has the potential to strengthen self-reliance through refugees starting businesses or purchasing greater quantities and varieties of seed, fertilizer, and ultimately modern farm equipment and means to transport crops to markets. Through credit, one can also pay for education which leads to additional economic opportunities and greater self-reliance.

The 2005 Central Africans interviewed reported having borrowed money only from friends for things like paying for health care or from shop owners to purchase food between harvests. It should be noted that there is also little borrowing among Cameroonians, as the bank structures in the East and Adamawa regions are weak. There is also the challenge of lack of documentation and credit history and collateral. In addition, there is a fear on the part of the refugees that they would not be able to repay a loan.

UNHCR is working on a microcredit program with the GRC. They are exploring how refugees can be part of a national program for extending credit to rural areas. As part of this effort, they will work with banks on the requirement for a guarantee. No further information on the program was available to the evaluation team.

Access to Employment and Other Forms of Livelihoods. For the most part, CAR refugees are not employed in the formal sector. This is because they do not have the required education or training for such employment, nor has the GRC made it clear how refugees could go about getting approval to work.

Farming and herding are the main forms of livelihood. Some refugees are also involved in such things as small animal husbandry, tailoring, or trading. Starting a business is difficult because the registration process is long and complicated, especially for non-citizens. To work around this, refugees combine their efforts with a friend or family member who has a business that is already registered or bypass the registration process altogether. This is not dissimilar to how Cameroonians deal with business registration.

UNHCR, PRM, and others have been supporting livelihood efforts in Cameroon. One example of livelihood support is the funding that PRM has provided to International Relief and Development (IRD), a U.S.-based organization. For three years (fiscal years 2010-2012), PRM provided a total of $2.2 million for agricultural and livelihood programs in the East and Adamawa regions. Despite repeated requests, interviews with IRD-specific beneficiaries of this program were limited. PRM provided the evaluation team with some reports and IRD provided the team with their fourth quarter report for their final year of funding, but the required reporting format does not allow for much analysis. Despite the limited information from interviews with beneficiaries and IRD reports, the evaluation team finds IRD's self-reporting to be credible based on observations and interviews with a wide range of refugees. Their achievements are summarized in the box on the previous page.

Overall, with PRM funding, IRD has helped teach a nomadic, non-farming culture how to cultivate and harvest crops for household consumption, income generation, and contributing to community crop storage. IRD believes that one of its main contributions has been helping refugees secure land for producing crops for household consumption and for cash income. After doing this for a number of years, they believe that refugees, land owners, and village chiefs are now well-informed and capable of negotiating on their own.

The team interviewed ten people who have benefited from the following income-generating activities. It is interesting to note in these examples how many individuals benefit from relatively small investments. It is also important to know that even with these investments, their families are still living in extreme poverty with no real prospects for progressing.

> "We want more help with income-generating activities so we can live a normal life and support our families."
> *– Middle-age female refugee*

- Community farm – Five years ago the chief offered land for a community farm, which has now grown to 27 hectares. Through IRD, seeds, tools, and training were also provided, along with two cows. The land is farmed by 39 families and it feeds hundreds of people. (One of the farmers interviewed has 40 children, but fortunately his wives are also involved in income-generating activities.) It takes about 30 minutes to reach the farm by truck, but many men who farm the land must walk for several hours to get there.
- Community chicken farm – Ten women – six Central Africans and four Cameroonians – cooperate in managing 63 chickens. The money from the sale of eggs is kept in a bank until they have a purpose for it. It was reported that a chicken farm in another village has resulted in enough income that the women were able to buy cattle which will then generate more income.
- Grinders – Several women displayed their manual grinding machines that they use for ground nuts and white beans. One of the women reported that she makes a little more than US$4 a week from selling the ground beans and nuts. She is able to feed her children at least one meal a day and sometimes two with this income and the maize she grows, plus a little income that her 10 and 12-year old children make gathering and selling firewood. Another woman with a grinding machine makes additional income by renting out her machine.

- Wood cart – International Medical Corps (IMC) provided a cart for carrying wood to a single mother of three. She makes about US$3 per week selling firewood and the man who helps her also makes US$3 per week, which he uses to help feed his family of nine. Every few months she must replace the tire that costs around US$4.
- Cassava drying materials – Through IRD, a 35-year old woman received a drying sheet, bucket, and container used in drying cassava root chips. IRD also provided training and about US$40 to get her started. She did not share how much money she nets when she sells the dried cassava, but it was clear that her family of eight does not have much money for food, health care, or clothing after paying US$10 to rent a house.

Skills Training. Having arrived in Cameroon as pastoralists, the refugees had to learn how to farm. (This sort of effort was not required for the Angolans or Burundian refugees in Zambia and Tanzania as they had agrarian backgrounds.) UNHCR and its partners are providing such training to the Central African refugees, teaching them how to plant and harvest crops typical to the area, such as cassava. In addition, they are providing refugees with the necessary inputs to apply their training, such as seeds/cassava sticks and hand tools.

One middle-aged man reported having been trained by a local tailor, but has not been able to apply the training for lack of a sewing machine. He also reported that IRD had told him about upcoming training for mechanics and drivers.

Feeling at Home

Cameroon feels very much like home to all the Central African refugees in the focus groups and all but one individual interviewed. Things that they like about living in Cameroon include:

- It is peaceful – no war, no problems
- We were given land to farm
- We are able to eat and sleep in peace, and to send our children to school
- We are not being chased, there is security, nobody disturbs us
- People are welcoming and understanding
- Our children are in school; we have escaped death
- My children are going to school here. My child can read. I am so happy!

The vast majority of those interviewed identify themselves either as Cameroonians or refugees but not as Central Africans. In a verification process that took place in March 2014, 97 percent of those interviewed said they wanted to stay in Cameroon.

> "If we did not have to face east to pray, we would never even look in that direction!" – *A Muslim refugee*

When asked by the evaluation team in July 2014 if they would like to return to CAR, they said things such as:

- Never! Everything is good here. Things there were destroyed.
- Never! Unless we are forced to return. I am scared that my mother and children will be killed.

- No! It's not safe and there is nothing left for us there.
- God forbid! We can never forget what happened there. We lost family members and our wealth. We are traumatized when we think about it. Here we can sleep in peace.
- No! The Anti-Balakas will cut off a Muslim's head if they cross the border.

Safety and Security. All the women and all but one group of men reported that they feel safe in Cameroon. The group that said they did not feel safe because they are so close to the border. However, they get some comfort from having the Cameroonian army's protection.

> "I was a wealthy man in Central Africa. Here I don't have many resources, but I have peace, which is more valuable." – *Male refugee*

Safety was not an issue until the 2013 caseload started arriving and then both refugees and host communities felt threatened by a possible spillover of the conflict in CAR with Anti-Balaka following refugees into Cameroon. While many of the new refugees are housed at refugee sites near the border, others have made their way to villages in the East and Adamawa regions. Cameroonians in these villages are concerned that the new refugees are not as peaceful and safe as the first wave of refugees and hope they are told of the importance of respecting the laws and keeping peace.

There have been some security issues, including CAR refugees taking two UN aid workers hostage in January 2014 to protest the lack of assistance and in May 2014, 18 civilians were abducted by a group of armed men from CAR. The GRC has taken action and the Department of National Security has coordinated an effort at the border to stop rebels and former combatants with weapons. The presence of the Rapid Intervention Battalion (BIR), an elite army unit, in villages near the border has been key in stabilizing the situation.

Housing. An indication that the refugees have been integrated is that they live in houses similar to the Cameroonians in the same area. And, like the Cameroonians, there is a range in the size and quality of the houses. The houses are generally constructed with mud brick and either thatched or corrugated metal sheet roofing. Based on observation only, the houses appear to meet Sphere standards for shelter. Many build their own houses and others rent from Cameroonian landlords. The refugees report that since they had more resources in CAR, they had better houses there.

In some cases, Cameroonians and Central Africans live next to each other while in other cases, the refugees live in a separate quarter of the village.

Social Connections. Perhaps the best indicator of social integration is the extent to which the refugees socialize with the local population. There appear to be no social barriers between the Central Africans and Cameroonians. The two groups socialize at all levels, including at school and community activities and there are no religious conflicts. The level of their interaction extends to marriage. Intermarriage is well accepted among both the refugees and the Cameroonians. Even when interviewees reported that no one in their family had intermarried, they did not have a problem with it.

Central Africans look very similar to the Cameroonians and have similar names, so unless you look at an identification card, it is difficult to know a person's nationality. In part, this is because of shared ethnic backgrounds and the Central Africans were nomadic and crossed the borders frequently before they were refugees. With this free movement back-and-forth, they have relatives in Cameroon or have established a strong presence in Cameroon. For those with relatives in Cameroon, it was easier to move to Cameroon as refugees. For others, they have lived in both countries for many years so Cameroon was like a second home for them. One Central African explained how he spent much of his life in Cameroon, where many of his 30 children live, so when he had a chance to get the benefits offered to refugees, he took advantage of it.

Equality Between Former Refugees and Host Communities

While there are high-levels of economic and social integration, there currently are no indications that legal integration is forthcoming for the CAR refugees in Cameroon. According to the refugee law, refugees have most of the same rights as citizens. However, the refugee law is inconsistently understood – by refugees and government officials – and inconsistently applied. This results in issues of equality in terms of freedom of movement, the right to work, and land ownership. Refugees feel that justice is being served and they are treated fairly by village chiefs and they have a voice.

At this point in time, refugees are not aware of their rights and are not demanding that those rights be respected. However, this is starting to change as refugees from the 2005 caseload are experiencing issues with their right to freedom of movement.

Documentation. The 2005 refugee law includes a provision for refugee identity cards. In 2007 the GRC authorized UNHCR to issue identity cards to refugees and in 2008 UNHCR started issuing cards to replace the less durable certificates. The cards are credit card size and are laminated. They have the holder's photo and UNHCR's emblem. In most cases, the cards are the only form of identification that the refugees hold, so it is problematic when the GRC-mandated two-year validity period has expired. UNHCR is now in the process of renewing the cards.

The GRC's Department of National Security will take over issuance of identification cards at some point, but it is believed that the current crisis will further delay transfer of responsibility. The GRC-issued cards will include the GRC emblem on the card along with the UNHCR emblem. This will be helpful because their current cards are not always recognized by police, banks, and government workers as being official. UNHCR expects that officials will need to be sensitized when the new cards are issued so that they understand what the card means and what rights come with the card.

It was reported to the evaluation team that some CAR refugees obtained Cameroonian identification cards during the last election. Apparently they declared themselves as Cameroonians and were not expected to submit proof of citizenship because that is a requirement not imposed on Cameroonians due to lack of documentation. It is also possible to purchase false Cameroonian identification cards on the black market which thousands are rumored to have

done. The evaluation team did not talk to anyone who admitted to having acquired false identification cards so the cost of such cards is not known.

Obtaining birth certificates is also challenging for both Cameroonians and refugees. Births in health centers and hospitals are registered, but obtaining a birth certificate requires effort once the mother and child leave the facility. While all children born in Cameroon have the right to a birth certificate that includes vital information including their parents' citizenship, few take the necessary steps to get one. A couple of refugees interviewed reported that UNHCR got the birth certificate for them.

There is not much appreciation on the part of government officials, Cameroonian citizens, or refugees of the importance of having a birth certificate.

Pathway to Citizenship. According to the 2005 refugee law, naturalization is possible. However, it is well beyond the means of refugees to pay for permanent residency which costs approximately US$500. After holding permanent residency for ten years, refugees over the age of 18 are eligible for naturalization. At this point, less than ten refugees have applied for it, according to one GRC official.

For the time being, the GRC is not willing to reduce the price or to facilitate a mass application process like the governments of Tanzania and Zambia have done. This is likely to remain the case while an indefinite number of CAR refugees continue to cross the border. The GRC wishes to follow the law precisely and indicates that previous efforts to get a reduction in the price failed. Furthermore, the preference is to grant citizenship to those who add value to the country. Unfortunately, refugees are not in a position to contribute to the national economy because they are living as subsistence farmers and did not come with any formal education.

There are also political issues involved. If the nearly 240,000 refugees currently in the country were to become citizens, the politics of the East and Adamawa regions could shift dramatically. In the East region, for example, the refugees make up an estimated 10 percent of the population and so with the right to vote, the refugees could influence elections. Increases in the number of citizens in the two regions could also shift the balance in parliament.

> "We are waiting for HCR to tell us what to do. We are like their children."
> *– Middle-aged CAR woman*
>
> "We are under HCR. They are like our father. They asked if we want to return and we told them no. If they ask us if we want to become citizens, we will tell them yes."
> *– Elderly CAR man*

At this point, refugees know nothing about the process of becoming a citizen nor do they think it is important. They already feel like they are Cameroonians, having moved back-and-forth across the border for many years as nomadic pastoralists living among fellow Mbororos and Mbaya. They did not have documentation in CAR and they do not believe they need it in Cameroon.

Citizenship for the 2005 caseload has not yet surfaced as a major issue, but it will become one if the cessation clause is invoked. Based on the refugees' current feelings, they are not likely to choose to repatriate. Those feelings may deepen the longer they are in Cameroon and become

more integrated socially and economically. However, if they were to lose their refugee status yet choose to remain in Cameroon, they may lose their right to protection.

Citizenship may also surface as an issue if refugees become interested in having rights comparable to others in their villages, i.e., voting. It could also become an issue if refugees' rights to such things as freedom of movement are not respected. In fact, several people interviewed said that they had never thought much about their rights until they started experiencing problems with freedom of movement.

Freedom of Movement. CAR refugees who arrived before March 2013 were not confined to camps, but rather have been living in Cameroonian host villages. These refugees are generally free to travel around the country for short visits or to relocate but must carry their ID cards. If they are caught without their IDs, they can be detained and UNHCR has to intervene before they can be released.

Several of the refugees interviewed told of incidents where police or gendarmes extorted money from them when they did not produce valid ID cards. Refugees also reported that police enter transportation buses at immigration enforcement checkpoints. If the refugee cannot produce a valid ID or is not willing to pay the official, they may not be permitted to continue their journey. To avoid these issues, bus companies will not issue tickets to refugees without a valid ID.

While this has likely been going on for some time, it seems to be happening more now that the GRC is trying to restrict the movement of the 2013 caseload because of security concerns. Refugees from the new caseload have not yet been issued ID cards, so any refugee caught without ID could be assumed to be outside of the refugee site without permission. They are then questioned and could be detained, beaten, and/or fined.

At the time of this evaluation, UNHCR was in the process of replacing large numbers of expired ID cards. In the absence of current IDs, refugees have to make travel arrangements that would minimize their chances of being caught. These included hiring expensive private transportation or walking through the bush, which can be dangerous and requires considerably more time.

There is a lack of understanding among government officials about the rights of refugees and inconsistent enforcement of the Convention. One official reported to the team that the ID cards specify their village and if caught outside that village, police have the right to question them. A close review of the ID cards revealed no such information.

> "Refugees must live as refugees. They are not to be free to move anywhere in the country." – *High ranking GRC official*

In terms of travel outside of Cameroon, the 2005 refugee law gives the right to refugees to have a UN Travel Document. However, none of the individuals interviewed for this study said they had passports or international travel documents. According to the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC) agreement, they are allowed to travel to other countries in the region for up to three months to work.

Access to Services. The GRC does not provide public relief to refugees or even to their own citizens. However, they cooperate with UNHCR and its partners in assisting refugees. Further, the refugee law grants refugees access to the same education and health facilities available to the Cameroonian public.

Unfortunately, the accessibility of services in the East and Adamawa regions is among the poorest in the country. In terms of education, the achievement rates are lower than the national standards, as are enrollment and completion rates. It is especially challenging to staff the schools in these regions because they are undesirable posts, thus the student-teacher ratio of 1:80-100 is far below the national standard of 1:53. And while public education is supposed to be free in Cameroon, the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) in these regions collects money from parents to help pay for additional teachers. Teachers expect housing to be provided, but the GRC cannot afford it and the Ministry of Basic Education (MINEDUB) reported that donor governments do not wish to pay for it. MINEDUB is aware of the challenges of educating refugees and, in the case of the new refugees, is collaborating with UNICEF.

The availability of health centers is also far below the national standard. In many of the villages visited, there was no health center so people have to travel a great distance to the nearest facility. And where there is a health center, it is usually insufficient to handle the population, let alone a growing population. For example, one village with a population of 24,000 (including 7,000 refugees) has one health center with one nurse and no doctor. Up until about two years ago, UNHCR helped old caseload refugees with medical expenses, but now the refugees pay the same as Cameroonians.

The areas where the refugee live also suffer from a lack of potable water and sanitation facilities, despite the fact that water points and latrines have been added since the arrival of refugees. While interviewees repeatedly spoke of this issue, no data were available to the team to understand the full extent of the issue. These areas are also isolated due to limited communication and poor roads.

Collaboration in Managing Villages. Refugees participate in management of the villages where they live, but not to the same extent as the Cameroonians. For example, refugees participate in village water or health committees, and may even lead committees, but the role of village chief is filled by a Cameroonian. While there is no law preventing a refugee from becoming a village chief, this does not happen. As one interviewee explained it, “Someone cannot just move into a village and become a chief regardless of whether or not they are a refugee.” At the same time, most of the villages in the study included a “refugee chief”, a more informal arrangement, who collaborated closely with the village chief and other village leaders in managing community life.

Refugees did not complain to the evaluation team that they do not have a voice and they feel that both the village chief and refugee leader respect them.

A notable feature of assistance to host villages is that it often benefits both the refugees and the local population. This is true for the new schools, health centers, water points, and latrines. In the case of community projects, UNHCR aims for a 70-30 ratio of refugee beneficiaries to host village beneficiaries.

Host Government and Host Community Welcoming

The Government of Cameroon and its citizens have welcomed refugees from other countries in the region, including the Central African Republic, Chad, Nigeria, Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, and Liberia. In 2012, the number of CAR refugees in Cameroon was approximately 92,000. With a second wave starting in March 2013, the number of CAR refugees had increased by 50 percent within a year and they continue to flow in. Some estimates now put the total population of CAR refugees in Cameroon at nearly 240,000.

The degree of welcoming varies. At the highest levels, the GRC provides protection through the allocation of land for refugee sites and allows refugees to access education and health services, but has not indicated any interest in facilitating their naturalization. At the regional, préfet, sous-préfet, and village levels, the attitudes vary greatly by individual. For example, one of the governors showed great concern for the refugees while another said that he was praying that the refugees would stop coming to Cameroon. Among the village chiefs, some offer land generously to the refugees, while others are cautious about the amount and location of the public land that is made available to the refugees.

Host Government Refugee Policies. The preamble of Cameroon's constitution states that "every person shall have the right to settle in any place and to move about freely, subject to the statutory provisions concerning public law and order, security and tranquility." In that spirit, the GRC signed the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, without reservation, its 1967 Protocol, and the 1969 Convention governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa.

In July 2005, Cameroon adopted a Law Defining the Legal Framework for Refugee Protection and the relevant decree followed in November 2011. The law applies the refugee definitions of both Conventions and prohibits *refoulement* of refugees "for reasons other than national security and public order, pursuant to a lawful decision, and with 72-hour notice to UNHCR" (World Refugee Survey 2009). Article 7 of the law states that "no person shall be turned back at the border ... to return to a territory where that person's life, bodily integrity or freedom would be threatened." There have been some cases of *refoulement* but there has not been systematic governmental harassment or serious physical risk (World Refugee Survey 2009).

In 2014, two GRC commissions on eligibility and appeals were created and their members nominated from different parts of the government (with UNHCR in an advisory role), but they are not yet operational due to issues related to office space. Therefore, UNHCR continues to hear claims and make decisions on refugee status. UNHCR will also continue to hold appeals hearings until the appeals commission is functioning.

The GRC is committed to a "no encampment" policy and is supportive of local integration. The 2005 caseload all live in villages in the East and Adamawa regions or have migrated to other parts of Cameroon. However, camps (which UNHCR Cameroon refers to as "refugee sites") have been established for the 2013 caseload. The GRC and UNHCR believe that concentrating the new refugees at designated sites is necessary for security reasons and to efficiently and effectively provide emergency response. The short-term plan is to stabilize their health, orient

them to school, and build capacity in agriculture and other income-generating activities. Holding them at the refugee sites also allows time to conduct an assessment of potential hosting villages and to coordinate with local leaders regarding access to land. At the time of the evaluation, UNHCR did not have a clear timeline or criteria for moving people from camps to villages.

There is concern that once the refugees are no longer at the refugee sites, additional infrastructure will be needed in host villages to support the increased population. Unfortunately, there is a lack of development actors and development funding in Cameroon to build schools and health centers. The GRC also faces the challenge of recruiting and retaining teachers and health workers for these areas.

Local Population's Acceptance of Refugees. Host villages have been welcoming and accept the refugees into their villages. For many, it is less about borders and citizenship and more about taking care of members of their ethnic group/faith and family.

The refugees from the 2005 caseload have made it easy to accept them because they are peaceful, law-abiding, and appreciative.

> "We can't deny the refugees; they are human like us."
> "We want to live in harmony with the refugees."
> "They are not here to beg or borrow."
> "We welcome them in our village because they are displaced and we know the same could happen to us."
> "We live together peacefully. We welcomed them and they accepted our welcome."
> - *Members of various host villages*

Refugees also bring with them economic benefits, which are of great interest to the host villages. While economic data are not available, host villages spoke about how adding refugees to the population has increased the demand for goods and services, which has benefited local businesses. The refugees have also increased the supply of goods and services by bringing in additional labor to others' businesses and in some cases operating their own businesses either informally or in partnership with an established business.

> "We don't like it when NGOs only serve the refugees with HCR cards – they get oil, rice, soya beans, and maize. Sometimes the refugees share their food gifts with us. We have no bad feelings towards them – they are refugees – but we Cameroonians also need help."
> "There are always people who have and people who don't. That's life. But we would be grateful if the vulnerable Cameroonians (old, blind, crippled) received help like the refugees do."

Refugees attract donors, such as PRM and UNHCR, which fund water points, schools, health centers, and food aid. Initially, there was animosity among host villagers because the refugees were the only ones benefiting. However, UNHCR addressed this situation by ensuring that both host villages and refugees share the benefits. All of the new infrastructure – schools, health centers, water points, latrines – are intended to be for both the refugees and host villages. UNHCR and its partners also aim for 70-30 or 60-40 splits when it comes to membership on committees, participation in training, and community income-generating activities. For example, the community chicken farm discussed above is managed by six refugee women and four women from the host village.

A couple areas of assistance that the host villages do not consider equitable are income-generating activities for individuals and distribution of food for the 2005 caseload. At this point, food aid is only given to the most vulnerable refugees and the host communities are troubled by the fact that no assistance is given to the most vulnerable Cameroonians. It is interesting to note, however, that some recipients of food aid have willingly shared their food and other commodities with non-recipients.

While the acceptance of the refugees has been good since 2005, things are changing with the arrival of the 2013 caseload. As discussed above, Cameroonians are concerned about threats to their safety, but feel some comfort in the increased presence of security forces and are hopeful that the 2013 caseload will learn to be as respectful and peaceful as the refugees who arrived before them. There is also the increasing tension related to agro-pastoral issues as the number of farmers and the number of herders grows.

Overall, the host villages visited for this evaluation value the presence of the refugees and said their absence would be felt deeply if they were to return to CAR. They described the absence in economic terms (less population would result in weaker markets) and in social terms (they would be losing friends).

Diplomatic and Programmatic Interventions

UNHCR Diplomatic Support. Documentation regarding the nature and extent of diplomatic support is not easily accessible and, with relatively frequent rotations in UNHCR and donor governments, there is little institutional memory of the support given over the years. The fact that this evaluation mission occurred in the midst of an emergency made it even more challenging to gather information about diplomatic interventions.

The current UNHCR representative has established relationships with key GRC officials and donor governments. Under her direction, UNHCR sent a letter to the GRC regarding permanent residency for the refugees. The letter requested a reduced fee and simplified process. It is reported that the Ministry of External Relations (MINREX) has endorsed the idea and forwarded it to the president. Given that this news was reported at the evaluation debriefing, there was not an opportunity to verify it.

UNHCR coordinates roundtable discussions and information sharing among UN agencies and partner governments in Yaoundé. They also send updates via email on what various partner governments are doing.

To address humanitarian issues, a Humanitarian Country Team coordinates humanitarian aid and shares information among team members. It is led by the UNDP resident representative and includes heads of mission of donor governments (US, European Union, France, Switzerland, Germany, Canada, Japan) and NGOs.

Officials from donor countries and UN offices participate on an inter-ministerial committee that was established in spring 2014 by MINREX. The purpose of the committee, which has met twice so far, is to focus on refugees, especially during the emergency situation with CAR refugees.

UNHCR Programmatic Support. Over the past 6 years, UNHCR had the following budget, offices, and staff. Also indicated on the table are the numbers of people assisted by UNHCR, which includes all refugees, persons of concern, and asylum seeks of all nationalities.

UNHCR has developed an assistance strategy that considers the vast area to cover (50,000 square kilometers), large number of sites (308), and limited human and financial resources. The strategy targets sites that have been covered less well by UNHCR and partners in the past. UNHCR has categorized the villages as follows:

- **Level 1** – lowest amount of external support and greatest needs in terms of infrastructure, services, and income-generating activities (192 sites)
- **Level 2** – some achievements have been made but progress is insufficient (72 sites)
- **Level 3** – greatest amount of support given for enhancement of basic social structures and empowerment activities; where refugees have achieved a reasonable level of self-sufficiency (44 sites)

Year	**Budget*** (USD in millions)	**Offices/Staff**	**Persons of Concern** (all nationalities)	**Persons of Concern Served by UNHCR** (all nationalities)
2009	9.5	3/53	101,180	98,280
2010	12.2	5/60	106,690	106,690
2011	13.2	5/75	103,820	103,820
2012	23.9	5/74	102,720	102,720
2013**	20.7	5/80	104,770	104,770
2014**	25.0	5/91	93,770	93,770

Source: UNHCR Global Reports 2009-2011; Global Appeal 2012-2014 (data not available before 2009)
*Budget data for 2009-2011 are "funds available" while 2012-2014 are projected needs.
** Projections for 2013 and 2014 were made before the full impact of the new emergency were known.

The plan was to give the highest priority in 2014 to Level 1 and Level 2 villages. The plan included support for construction and rehabilitation of basic and social infrastructure (health centers, classrooms, water points, etc.) and activities related to the empowerment of refugees (agriculture, livestock, and other income-generating activities). It also included monitoring activities for Level 3 villages to ensure implementation of on-going activities.

The plan supports a strategy that aims to achieve the following:

1. Refugees are progressively self-sufficient and self-reliant.
2. Refugees are integrated into various national programs, including inclusion of elderly persons into Ministry of Social Affairs programs.
3. Maintain a peaceful cohabitation of refugees and host communities through projects that benefit both groups.
4. Implement well-researched durable solutions (majority of refugees are requesting local integration).

5. Local authorities have the capacity to ensure a smooth transfer of responsibilities on refugee management, with emphasis on health (by reinforcing medical staff and equipment) and managing water points, etc.
6. Local NGOs empowered to take over from international NGOs upon their exit.

With the major influx of new refugees from CAR beginning in 2013, UNHCR and its partners' attention has been diverted to provide basic needs and essential services to new refugees. The December 2013 Global Appeal focuses on the new refugees and urban refugees. The only activities listed that are not specified to be for refugees in camps or urban areas are:

1. Improving self-reliance and livelihoods: Offer guidance on business market opportunities to refugees with professional qualifications to provide support to help them initiate business activities.
2. Reduce the risk of statelessness: Build the capacities of local institutions, organize information and sensitization campaigns, support vulnerable individuals to confirm their nationality, and assist the GRC to organize mobile birth-registration campaigns.

UNHCR's implementing partners are: Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), Africa Humanitarian Action (AHA), *Association de Lutte contre les Violences faites aux Femmes*, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), FAIRMED, International Medical Corps (IMC), International Relief and Development (IRD), Plan - Cameroon, *Première Urgence - Assistance Médicale Internationale* (PU-AMI), and IFRC.

PRM Programmatic Support. In 2014, PRM provided the following funding in support of organizations working in Cameroon:

UNHCR	$115.7 million
UNICEF	$35.4 million
WHO	$1.1 million
IOM	$450,000
NGOs	$700,000

In the past, PRM has provided funding to IRD (discussed above) for agricultural and livelihood activities, PU-AMI for water and sanitation projects, and IMC for health (including medical mobile units), nutrition, HIV/AIDS, and gender-based violence.

The U.S. Embassy administers funding of the Julia Taft Refugee Fund. The primary objective is to encourage self-reliant development by funding community-based organizations. Among the 2014 fund recipients are the following organizations:

- RESPECT Cameroon, the recipient of a US$25,000 grant to identify gaps in primary school education for refugee children, to offer refresher tutoring courses for students, and to assist with reinserting students from refugee communities into regular schools to support their integration into Cameroonian society.

USAID's presence in Cameroon is limited and focuses on conserving key forest resources, healthcare, and HIV/AIDS.

Challenges. Each type of intervention has unique challenges, but some challenges are common to all the programs being implemented in Cameroon. One of the most fundamental challenges is funding. Implementing partners in Cameroon cite the challenges of working with one-year funding from UNHCR and PRM (they did not indicate any knowledge of multi-year funding possibilities) and it is often late to arrive, there are gaps between when one year's funding ends and the next year's funding begins which makes it difficult to maintain momentum and retain staff, and it is difficult to implement long-term strategies because of uncertainty about funding from one year to the next. A new challenge in implementing local integration programming is that at this point in time a majority of the funds and human resources are being diverted to address the needs of the new arrivals.

Another challenge is the logistics of implementing programs in 308 villages spread over 50,000 square kilometers. This is exacerbated by the poor road conditions that make travel difficult, especially in the rainy season. The situation is further complicated by the distance from a village to a project site. One community farm visited by the evaluation team took 30 minutes to reach by truck. And while motorcycles are available to some farmers, most must travel by foot from their home to farm plots that have been made available to them.

The fact that the project offices and project sites are somewhat remote and hard to reach makes it difficult to recruit and retain project staff.

B. FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

One of the most significant opportunities and challenges that lies ahead is absorbing the new influx of refugees as effectively as the 2005 caseload has been integrated. The evaluation, while not ideal timing on some levels, provided an opportunity to consider the lessons that have been learned from the 2005 caseload that can be applied them toward the 2013 caseload. Below is an initial list.

1. Start working on local integration as soon as refugees' condition is stabilized. If the refugees are considering staying in Cameroon for any length of time, support agriculture now (with training, land, tools, and seeds) and income-generating activities. This will allow them to keep their dignity, use their capacities, and provide for their basic needs. This may require helping the new refugees negotiate for land.
2. Maintain good relations with host communities by continuing to involve village chiefs in decision making. It will be important to ensure that new refugees are sent into villages where they will be warmly welcomed. Note, however, that many refugees have already self-settled or will prefer to settle near other family members.
3. Ensure that there are benefits to villages hosting the new refugees. This is particularly important now that this standard has been set and villages will be expecting to get new schools, health centers, water points, and latrines. So far, the new infrastructure in host villages has been provided by humanitarian funding. However, UNHCR should meet with development partners to plan a transition of responsibilities for funding

infrastructure development and coordinating with the GRC regarding development activity in the East and Adamawa regions.

UNHCR might also want to consider using old refugees as mentors and advisors to new refugees.

The evaluation team recommends that UNHCR coordinate with its partners to reflect on lessons learned more comprehensively as new strategies and plans are developed, asking questions such as: How are the needs of this caseload different? What worked well with the 2005 caseload that should work with the 2013 caseload? What could we improve upon or do differently?

UNHCR, in collaboration with GRC officials, village chiefs, and implementing partners, will need to clarify the strategy for moving new refugees out of the camps/refugee sites into villages and closing the camps to respect Cameroon's no-encampment policy. Initially the strategy should include clear indicators for when households are ready to relocate and the plans to get them to that point.

It will also be important to establish a timeline, keeping in mind that the longer the refugees are in the camp, the more established they will be in their housing, economic activities, and social relationships. This has certainly been the case in Zambia and Tanzania, making the prospect of re-location much more challenging.

Other lessons from Tanzania and Zambia worth considering in Cameroon include:

1. Consider the possibility of a protracted refugee situation and potential environmental impacts when designating land for camps. This includes monitoring and addressing deforestation and promoting farming techniques that ensure continued fertility of farm land.
2. Ensure that the longer term needs of host villages are incorporated into USG development plans through PRM and USAID. Other donors, including countries as well as international financial institutions such as the World Bank, should do the same.
3. In collaboration with UNHCR and UNDP, include settlements as part of district and regional development plans; provide infrastructure in settlements on par with local communities.
4. Use current government structures to manage local integration processes rather than creating new ones.
5. Include all pertinent levels of government – village, district, regional – in key decision making processes regarding durable solutions.
6. Confirm all agreements in writing to the extent practical, to help minimize the chances that decisions will be rescinded or delayed.
7. UNHCR facilitate cooperation between the country of origin and the host country through tri-partite discussions. This is especially important when addressing identification documentation issues and when repatriation may be possible.
8. Develop a consistent and regular communications plan to help keep refugees/former refugees informed and contain rumors among refugees, host communities, and government officials.

CHAPTER IV: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. CONCLUSIONS

Social and economic integration have been relatively successful with refugees living peacefully among Cameroonians and with a comparable standard of living. UNHCR's approach in Cameroon has contributed to the achievements toward social and economic integration: they have established and maintained good relations with GRC officials, have involved village chiefs in decision making, have helped ensure that host villages benefit from external assistance, and have placed a high priority on agricultural and livelihood interventions. Recently UNHCR has diverted its attention away from local integration of the 2005 caseload because of a new emergency that demands their attention and resources.

The social integration has been somewhat organic because of the shared ethnicities and frequent movement across the border for many years. The social integration was facilitated by the GRC's no-encampment policy, respect for refugees' rights to freedom of movement, and allowing refugees full access to public services, as well as the villages' goodwill, and the refugees' efforts to fit in. There are several threats to their peaceful co-existence, including security concerns related to the new refugees, agro-pastoral issues, and lack of sufficient infrastructure and services to meet the needs of the Cameroonians, old refugees, and new refugees. While humanitarian funds are currently being used to build schools, water supply and sanitation facilities, and health centers, at some point the transition from humanitarian to development assistance must occur. Unfortunately, there is currently a scarcity of development resources and actors in Cameroon.

In terms of economic integration, there has been progress in moving refugees off external assistance. The agricultural and livelihood support of UNHCR and PRM has been particularly helpful in promoting economic integration. The agricultural support has included facilitating land negotiations and providing training, tools, and seeds. The livelihood support has also been effective because in addition to training for income-generating activities, the assistance has included the necessary tools, equipment, and other inputs to apply the training. Unfortunately with relatively small plot sizes and lack of modern farming equipment or sustainable agricultural practices, refugees are not likely to move beyond a hand-to-mouth existence. Similarly, the livelihood support is small scale and produces very little income which then requires households to supplement their income to meet basic needs. Unless the activities are at a larger scale, they are not sufficient to produce the extra income required to expand income-generating activities and move beyond a subsistence level. Lack of education and training, credit, and access to markets (through freedom of movement, good road, efficient transportation, reliable communication, etc.) will also prevent the refugees – and host communities – from progressing economically.

The main barrier for full integration is the lack of a pathway to citizenship. While legal integration is allowed by law, it is not accessible to the vast majority of refugees because of lack

of information about the process, the costs, and the bias against uneducated subsistence farmers. So far, the GRC has not indicated any interest in facilitating the process, reducing the fees, or changing their expectations about the potential contributions of rural refugees. The refugees have not yet expressed a desire to be naturalized, but the issue may surface if they become more interested in enjoying the same rights as their Cameroonian neighbors, such as enjoying unrestricted freedom of movement, holding civil service jobs, obtaining titles for land, or voting. It could also become an issue if the Cessation Clause is invoked. In this case they would lose their refugee status and be asked to repatriate, which they do not want to do. If they chose to stay, which may increase in likelihood the more settled they become in Cameroon, they will lose their identification documents (few have birth certificates), protection, and the right to stay in Cameroon.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

To support a continuation of the current peaceful coexistence of refugees and Cameroonians, the evaluation team recommends the following actions for UNHCR in order of priority:

1. Encourage the GRC to work with village leaders to find solutions to the agro-pastoral issue as farmers and herders clash over livestock that destroy crops because of lack of access to grazing areas. While this is not a uniquely refugee issue, it is perceived to be and will continue intensify as an issue as the number of CAR refugees in Cameroon increases.

2. Ensure that all refugees have current identification cards and that they understand the importance of taking them when they travel outside their village. UNHCR is in the process of providing updated ID cards to the 2005 caseload and continues to emphasize the importance of carrying them when traveling outside the village. At some point in the future UNHCR will provide ID cards to the 2013 caseload.

3. Carefully consider the lessons learned from the 2005 caseload and how best to integrate refugees from the new caseload. (An initial list is provided in this report, which UNHCR should further discuss.) Special consideration to be given to establishing criteria for when to move the refugees from camps into villages and the most effective process for making that happen.

4. Conduct an awareness campaign so that villages know what is being done to ensure their peace and safety, and gain an appreciation for benefits that will come to them from hosting refugees, i.e., more government services, increased demand for goods, and increased supply of goods. Caution should be taken not to create expectations that cannot be met. The awareness campaign could be conducted as UNHCR surveys potential hosting villages.

5. Provide food and medical assistance to the most vulnerable Cameroonians in host villages on par with the assistance provided to vulnerable refugees in the same villages.

6. Monitor the progress of Level 3 villages while providing increased assistance to Level 1 and Level 2 villages. This will include ensuring that there are teachers in the new schools and monitoring attendance rates, completion rates, and achievement rates; that there are health workers in the new health centers and that the refugees, especially the vulnerable refugees, are seeking treatment; that the water committees are functioning and the pumps are being well maintained; and that the livelihood assistance is being used for its intended purposes. Additional UNHCR staff may be required to oversee the implementing partners who work in the villages.

7. Implement plans to build the capacities of local institutions to manage birth registration, organize information and sensitization campaigns around registration and documentation, support vulnerable individuals to confirm their nationality, and assist the GRC to organize mobile birth-registration campaigns throughout the villages in East and Adamawa regions. UNHCR should consider working with Plan on this given their experience with Universal Birth Registration in urban areas.

8. Continue working with the GRC to create a pathway to citizenship. This should be done when the GRC is ready so that they are not pressured into making commitments that they cannot keep or creating expectations that cannot be met fully. All efforts to create the pathway should be completely consistent with GRC laws so that the validity of citizenship cannot be questioned. (Please see: *Field Evaluation of Local Integration of Former Refugees in Tanzania, September 8, 2014* for a discussion of potential pitfalls.)

The team recommends the following for both UNHCR in Cameroon and PRM to support the local integration of refugee populations for whom voluntary return and resettlement are not feasible:

1. Stay focused on the local integration program even though the demands of the current emergency require significant attention and resources. This will require designating staff and budget for UNHCR and implementing partners that are focused solely on local integration. It will also require orienting new staff of UNHCR and partner governments to help them keep focus during staff transitions and competing priorities.

2. Work with humanitarian and development actors to secure funding for much needed infrastructure and public services such as schools, health centers, water points, and latrines for both refugees and host villages in these remote and impoverished villages in the East and Adamawa regions. Priority should be given to Level 1 and 2 villages.

3. Continue supporting agricultural interventions that will lead to self-sufficiency and increase the refugees' standard of living. Moving beyond subsistence-level farming to cash crops will require larger plots of land, which will have to be negotiated with the village chiefs. Current UNHCR implementing partners will also need to expand training and provide additional inputs to cultivate the additional land.

4. Continue funding income-generating activities, but increase the scale to a point where households have sufficient income to feed their families and invest in expanded income-

generating activities sot that they can escape the cycle of poverty. For example, rather than purchasing manual grinding machines that are labor-intensive and produce little cash income for a household, consider purchasing more electric machines for a group of households that will result in greater efficiencies and more income.

5. Support micro-credit programs so that refugees – and host villages – can borrow money to fund education and training, start businesses, or purchase equipment that allows refugees to, based on their personal goals, increase their income and move beyond their subsistence existence.

6. Encourage the GRC to allow full freedom of movement and work with the GRC to provide training on refugee rights where there are concentrations of refugees. The training should involve all stakeholders, including community members and the refugees themselves.

Recommendations for the Government of the Republic of Cameroon include:

1. Allow full freedom of movement and make sure that officials understand refugee's rights.

2. Continue providing security at the borders and in/around the refugee sites. In addition to providing police and gendarmes, the GRC could improve security by establishing a community neighborhood watch program that coordinates with police on the communities' security needs. UNHCR with implementing partners and GRC should conduct training on a quarterly basis so that within a year these topics are covered: refugees' rights through the lenses of being hosted by the people of Cameroon, gender-based violence, and community/neighborhood watch security methodologies.

3. Take responsibility, as planned, for issuing GRC identification cards for refugees. It is not clear what is preventing the General Delegation for National Security from moving forward**.**

4. Ensure that there are teachers and health workers to staff newly constructed facilities. This requires funding for salaries and the necessary incentives for trained professionals to move to regions of Cameroon that are less developed and where housing may be an issue.

5. Work with village leaders to find solutions to the agro-pastoral issue. The solutions must acknowledge that herders – whether they be Cameroonian or Central African – depend on cattle for their livelihood, need land for grazing their cattle, and are responsible for managing their cattle.

ATTACHMENT A: LIST OF PEOPLE INTERVIEWED

Government of the Republic of Cameroon

1. Richard Etoundi, MINEREX
2. Benjamin Billong, MINEREX (attended debriefing only)
3. Ambrose Owotssogo Onguene, Director of Projects, Planning, and Cooperation, MINEDUB
4. Richard Temfack, MINEDUB (attended debriefing only)
5. Jean Hyacinthe Ebela, Chief of Planning and Cooperation, Office of Political Affairs, MINATD
6. Celestin Kengne, MINATD (attended debriefing only)
7. Alphonse Elanga Abina, MINATD (attended debriefing only)
8. Samuel Ivaha, Governor, East Region
9. Ahmat Abakar, Governor, Adamawa Region
10. Alassan Fouapong, Préfet, Mbere Division (Meiganga)
11. Gargá Diguir, Sous-Préfet, Ngawi Sub-Division (Bafouck)
12. Samuel Menoba, Sous-Préfet, Mandjou Sub-Division

United Nations and Other International Organizations

13. Ndeye Ndiougue Ndour, UNHCR Representative
14. Charlotte Ridung, Deputy Representative/Protection, UNHCR
15. Masimango Mweze, Senior Program Officer, UNHCR
16. Felipe Camargo, Senior Program Officer, UNHCR
17. Mahamodou Guindo, Head of Field Office, UNHCR/Bertoua
18. Ben Bello Mahmoudou, Program Assistant, Community Services, UNHCR/Bertoua
19. Joel Enoka Bagnem, Program Assistant, WATSAN-ENV, UNHCR/Bertoua
20. Jose Katunda, Head of Field Office, UNHCR/Meiganga
21. Daimon Kassaimon, Associate Field Officer, UNHCR/Meiganga
22. Francois Omeude, UNHCR (attended debriefing only)
23. Dirk Hebecker, UNHCR (attended debriefing only)
24. Susan Din, UNHCR (attended debriefing only)
25. Zephirin Emini Ekouma, Chief, Government & Crisis Unit, UNDP
26. Adam Zakari, Deputy Head of Office, UNICEF
27. Bechir Aounen, Chief, Health Section, UNICEF
28. Belyse Ngum, MCH Officer, UNICEF
29. Magdalena Mayer, HIV Officer, UNICEF
30. Marjana Badas, Child Protection Officer, UNICEF
31. Faustin Ekah, WASH Officer, UNICEF
32. Samuel Serje Zanja, M&E Officer, UNICEF
33. Wally Badiane, Chief of Office, UNICEF/Maroua site

Partner Governments

34. Erika Lewis, Political Officer, Embassy of the United States
35. Martial Beti-Marace, Ambassador, Central African Republic
36. Laís de Souza Garcia, First Secretary, Embassy of Brazil
37. Nei Futuro Bitencourt, Ambassador, Brazil
38. Caroline Comiti, Humanitarian Affairs, Embassy of France
39. Maxime Montagner, Officer for Business Economy and Governance, Cameroonian Delegation, European Union
40. Cédric Pierard, Crisis Planning Officer, Regional Delegation, European Union
41. Dominique Feron, Rapid Response Coordinator, Regional Delegation, European Union

Non-Governmental Organizations / Implementing Partners

42. Alphonse Um Boock, Regional Representative for Africa, FairMed Foundation
43. Anne Victoire Wakabi, FairMed Foundation/Bertoua
44. Alim Nouhou, FairMed Foundation/Bertoua
45. Desire Fomo, FairMed Foundation
46. James Jean, Country Director, IRD
47. Evaristus Uze, IRD/Bertoua
48. Louise Maidjoule, IRD/Bertoua
49. Samuel Baudry, Program Coordinator, PU-AMI
50. Mbala Bodojc, Technical Director, PU-AMI
51. Ibrahim Yakoubou, Assistant Technical Director for Agriculture, PU-AMI
52. Roger Kadima, Acting Country Director, IMC
53. Dorothy Dissake Ekosso, Technical Coordinator, IMC
54. Isaac Kulimunshi, IMC/Meiganga
55. Pen Amaah, Deputy Medical Coordinator, IMC
56. Famari Barro, Country Director, Plan (attended debriefing only)
57. Monique Tamouya, Education Project Coordinator, Plan

Other

Various traditional village chiefs

Refugees and Host Community

Interview Type	**Gender**	**Age Group**
Focus Group – CAR Refugees	82 Males 145 Females	<18 4% 18-29 12% 30-50 48% >50 35%
In-depth One-on-One – CAR Refugees	7 Males 11 Females	<18 28% 18-29 22% 30-50 50% >50 0%
Focus Groups – Cameroonian Host Community	132 Males 81 Females	<18 1% 18-29 33% 30-50 30% >50 37%
TOTAL	221 Males 237 Females **458 TOTAL**	<18 4% 18-29 22% 30-50 40% >50 34%

ATTACHMENT B: LIST OF DOCUMENTS CONSULTED

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Crisp, Jeff. "The Local Integration and Local Settlement of Refugees: A Conceptual Framework and Historical Analysis." UNHCR Working Paper No. 102. April 2004.
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http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646c101.html

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U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants. "World Refugee Survey 2009 – Cameroon."
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